United Nations ST/IC/2006/27

Secretariat

13 July 2006

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2006 competitive examination for Arabic-language verbatim reporters**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the 2006 competitive examination for Arabic-language verbatim reporters, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 of 23 March 1998.

2. The competitive examination for Arabic-language verbatim reporters will be held, tentatively, on **31 October 2006** in New York, Geneva, in a number of Arab countries and other locations according to the number and location of qualified candidates convoked for the examination. The purpose of the examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Arabic-language verbatim reporters will be filled.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as qualified external candidates. Staff members of subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or to special missions are considered external candidates for the purpose of the examination. Such candidates, if successful in the examination, will be offered a new appointment with the United Nations subject to normal United Nations recruitment procedures and standards. Staff members who are successful and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Arabic-language verbatim reporter posts as they arise in the language services in New York. Successful candidates are expected to serve **a minimum of five years** in language posts. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 12 to 14 below.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2006.

06-42804 (E) 170706

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Arabic as their main language;[1]

(b) Have a perfect command of Arabic and an excellent knowledge of English and one of the other official languages of the United Nations (Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish). The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Candidates who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages. For that purpose, staff members should attach to their application either a photocopy of a diploma or a certificate from a language school or a brief explanation of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed. Staff members are advised to submit photocopies, not originals, of such documentation;

(c) For staff members who have at least five years of experience in translation, editing or journalism, the requirement of an additional official language may be exceptionally waived by the Board of Examiners. In such cases, the candidate will be required to translate a specialized text in part (d) of the examination (see paragraph 8 (d) below);

(d) Hold at least a three-year first-level university degree;

(e) Attach to the application form, which must be filled out in English, a one-page essay in Arabic (approximately 500 words) explaining why they wish to work as a verbatim reporter at the United Nations.

In addition, candidates are expected to have computer and Arabic word-processing skills.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who are over the age of 56 by the deadline for submission of applications will not be eligible to sit the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

6. The requirement of a degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (d) may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

7. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final**.

8. The written verbatim reporting examination, to be held, tentatively, on **31 October 2006**, will consist of four papers:

(a) Translation of a text from English into Arabic (one hour and a half). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only candidates who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Editing of an Arabic text to ensure linguistic integrity, clarity and consistency of meaning (one hour);

(c) Editing of a text in Arabic to bring it into line with the original English (one hour);

(d) Translation into Arabic of a text in an official language of the United Nations other than English, or of a specialized text from English into Arabic for those admitted in the case described in paragraph 4 (c) (one hour).

9. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will **not** be permitted during the examination. Similarly, candidates may not use personal computers to prepare their papers.

10. On the basis of the results of each written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to an interview. The Board will interview each candidate to assess general knowledge, professional experience, knowledge of the United Nations and current events, adaptability to the prevailing working conditions of the United Nations Secretariat, readiness to serve at any duty station and ability to work as a member of a team. Candidates may also be required to take some additional short tests at the time of the interview, including a computer skills test. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview **should not** assume that they will automatically be offered an assignment.

11. On the basis of the overall result of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the relevant roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores or results.

12. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Arabic-language verbatim reporters for a trial period of two years. Staff members below the P-2 level or who are in the General Service category will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels.

13. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management may be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their functions at the P-3 level. Staff members on fixed-term appointment will be

eligible to be considered for permanent appointment subject to the requirements of the staff rules in force. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

14. In accordance with the needs of the service/section, successful candidates may be called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

15. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form, and submit it together with a copy of the P.11 or PHP and the essay mentioned in paragraph 4 (e), no later than **31 August 2006**, to:

2006 Competitive Examination for Arabic-language verbatim reporters

Examinations and Tests Section
Division for Organizational Development
Office for Human Resources Management
Room S-2575-E
United Nations Secretariat
New York, N.Y. 10017
Fax No.: (1-212) 963-3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@ un.org

Applications received after the above deadline will not be considered.

16. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, those staff members are requested to return their applications to the Division for Organizational Development of the Office of Human Resources Management through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations Information Centre of their respective duty stations by **31 August 2006**, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Division for Organizational Development.

06-42804

Application (for staff members of the United Nations Secretariat only)

2006 competitive examination for Arabic-language verbatim reporters

Index No.

Last name Category Level

First name Male Female

Date of entry on duty Month Year

Type of contract Expiration date

Department/office Duty station

Room No. Tel. extension Fax extension E-mail

Have you taken this examination before? Yes Year No

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes Year No

If yes, which examination(s)?

What is your main language?[1]

Do you intend to take the extra specialized paper (instead of the requirement of a third language)? Yes No

Please complete an updated P.11 or PHP form and attach it to this application. Applications submitted without a P.11 or PHP form or without the one-page essay in Arabic mentioned in paragraph 4 (e) will not be considered.

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date Signature

I have read information circular ST/IC/2006/27 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2006 competitive examination for Arabic-language verbatim reporters and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as an Arabic-language verbatim reporter will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 12 to 14 of that circular.

Date _____ Signature _____